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## FOREIGN TRADE AND COMMERCIAL GEOGRAPHY

WILCOX, EARLEY N. *Tropical Agriculture*. Pp. xviii, 373. Price, \$2.50. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1916.

Agricultural products annually imported into the United States from the tropics have a value of over \$600,000,000,—a third of all of the imports of this country. Most of us do not realize that “the humblest table bears food products from Brazil, Cuba, India, Java, Malacca Islands, Tahiti, Mauritius, Gold Coasts, Jamaica, Hawaii, Porto Rico and other parts of the tropics.” The author has had in mind the general reader in writing this work, not the farmer of the tropics.

Little has been written in the past in this country of tropical agriculture, largely perhaps on account of having no direct interest in those countries. The possession, however, of the Philippines, Porto Rico, Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam and the Panama Canal Zone have attracted attention to the tropical problems by American economists and men of commerce. The public school as well as the college student should be interested to read it now.

Although the author has had for his purpose in writing this book the idea of impressing the reader with the great opportunities of the tropics still he has been very fair, and he will probably not succeed in convincing the reader that he would do well to cast his lot for a livelihood as a small farmer in the tropics.

He is especially clear in discussing economic conditions not to overestimate the opportunities for the small farmer but shows that it is the large owner who reaps his profit from low-priced labor or the middle man who has made great profits. The problem of the tropics is first to establish definite and economically sound policies. Under the present system of managing of the tropics the opportunity now is only for the capitalist, the agricultural expert, or the man of commerce. Thus far he says “a system of managing the tropics has merely developed a feudal system for the exploitation of land and of cheap labor.”

In discussing the climate he speaks of the many advantages but does not fail to speak of the disadvantages. Conditions have changed and the precautions taken of sanitation make it no longer dangerous to go to the tropical cities. There are almost none of the discomforts of our climate yet he says: “It still remains doubtful whether the tropics are well adapted for the permanent residence of the white man.”

Climate, soil, agricultural methods, live stock and economic conditions are briefly discussed. The larger part of the volume deals with a description of the nature, source and commercial importance of about 350 tropical products, including sugar cane, nuts, fruits, starchy foods, tobacco, fiber plants, rubber, gum, drugs, tans, dyes, spices, flavorings, perfumes, oils, timber and woods. Several of these are not now commercially important but could be developed. The appendix, with reviews of the literature related to the subject and a full bibliography of the periodicals, from all parts of the world are especially good.

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